



## March 2014 Newsletter

Written by Ted Stubbersfield

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Dear Reader

### [Hardwood at Groundline](#)



I was out driving with my wife on Sunday when I noticed this fence that has fallen over. It is no more than 10 years old, probably less. The posts are hardwood and of course they are set into concrete which then decayed at groundline and simply snapped off. The posts are hardwood but that does not mean much if the lowest priced tenderer did not pay extra for the better performing timber. But at the end of the day purchasing the better hardwood will not prevent, just delay the inevitable. Hardwood and concrete do not mix, It makes no difference if sawn timber is treated or otherwise. How do you do it correctly? [Follow this link](#) [See also the March 2011 Newsletter.](#) Knowing how to put a post in the ground is not "secret men's business" but is basic knowledge every tradesmen is paid to know.

But what about treated natural rounds? Years ago I was at a conference on power poles and one of the speakers addressing the subject of ground line maintenance said that one of the worst areas for ground line decay was in the Lockyer Valley - i.e. the poles I was supplying were performing poorly. Why hadn't anyone said anything to me - because they met specification. At that conference we were told that the answer was going to be a shrink wrapped bandage full of preservative. Prior to that the pole was excavated to a depth of about 450 mm and creosote poured in and mixed with the backfill. I am told that the new bandage actually promoted decay because the pole could not breath



Ground  
line

Maintenance is still being conducted and these two images show it being done to a pole outside of our premises. This happens every five years and the shrink wrap bandage has now been replaced with a loose fitting bandage with boron pellets. Strangely, it appears that the wrap is not installed when the pole first goes in the ground before any decay has taken place.

How effective is this maintenance? It really isn't known what the service life of a power pole actually is. It is thought to be 40 years. The difficulty is that a powerline is generally upgraded and the poles replaced with larger ones before they have to be removed due to failure. This mucks up any statistics.. Groundline maintenance is amplified upon in my Timber Preservation Guide.

So, even if you have been careful and not used concrete you still need to maintain a H5 CCA pole at ground line. There is a lot to be said for upgrading critical poles that will not be maintained to H6 but then, with pigment emulsified creosote you do not want to be touching them.

## [Blog being written for Timber+DESIGN Magazine](#)

Tony Neilson, a well known publisher in the timber industry, has asked me to write a monthly blog for his Timber+DESIGN web magazine. It is a very useful magazine for those interested in timber that has been used imaginatively. **My first blog coming out in late March is on whether to use stainless or galvanised fasteners and brackets in weather exposed applications.** This blog is worth reading as manufacturers recommendations are seldom followed [Click here for a link to the website of Timber+DESIGN magazine.](#) [Click here to go straight to the blog.](#) To be on the mailing list, contact Kay Phillips [through this link.](#) Next month's blog will be whether boardwalk timber should be treated to H3 or H5.

## [Project for Horse Lovers](#)



A projects that Chris completed late last year was to supply material and assembled doors for a stable built in Gatton. This stable block is built within a more or less standard kit metal shed. The rails on the stalls were 125x50 spotted gum and the slats were 88x19 spotted gum decking. The walls were downgrade life plus, by downgrade, I mean to our standards. I particularly like spotted gum for horse and cattle yard rails as it is unlikely to shatter if an animal hits it hard. This resilience is why spotted gum is recommended for handles in striking tools.

When we produced decking we pulled out all the short lengths (under 1.8m) which meant that we ended up with a large quantity of shorts that we did not know what to do with. Then every so often a job comes along that requires a lot of shorts such as a ramp. Do your timber supplier a favour. If you need 200 pieces at 1.2m don't order 50/4.8m, he might even let you have them at a discount.

### **Bridge Quote Requests**

If there is any doubt that OSA make the best kit bridges in the country look at the [Berrinba Wetlands Project](#) . Not all bridges are equal. After encountering three bridges in one month that did not meet the Bridge Code I wrote the [May 2012 newsletter](#). Refer to it when assessing the suitability of quotes.

[Steel bridge Quotation Request Form](#)

[Timber Bridge Quotation Request Form](#)

#### **More information:**

If you have timber road/rail/heritage bridge issues,

we suggest you talk to:

Mr. Dan Tingley

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